SATURDAY, JULY 19, 2025 SERVING NILES, BUCHANAN AND EDWARDSBURG

Niles Daily Star

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Buchanan hears plan for Stark Elementary building

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

BUCHANAN — Stark Elementary School on Buchanan's southeast side could be getting a new lease on life and be home to a nursing school after being vacant for 14 years.

Dr. Ayana Redding announced her plans at Monday's Buchanan City Commission meeting. Redding's announcement was greeted with praise and best wishes from City Commissioners. "You don't know how ecstatic I am about your plans," Commissioner Dan Vigansky said. Commissioner Larry Money echoed that sentiment, saying "great work" to Redding.

Redding said after the meeting that she hopes to close on the purchase of the building in the next few months with the goal of having a grand opening in October. She already has a building she uses for training students in downtown Niles and plans to keep that location open as well.

She is the director of education for ALR Educational Health Services, Inc. She said the plan is to offer one-year courses not only in practical nursing but also in medical assisting and phlebotomy. She said she is in the process of getting accreditation for the courses and already has clinical relationships with Corewell Health and Beacon Health.

Monday's meeting also featured complaints on two different matters, one about an altercation near the post office and another about a temporary traffic order approved by the commission earlier in the meeting.

Resident Mindy Hill said that she and her daughter were accosted on their way to the post office last Tuesday. She said they were threatened by a man who had been in a car with Indiana temporary plates.

"I went to the police and they said

See PLAN, Page A8

Brandywine school board appoints new member

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

NILES — The Brandywine Board of Education has a new board member after interviews and action Monday night by the school board. Trustee Elaine McKee resigned unexpectedly July 1 and two people met the July 10 application deadline for the seat.

Board members interviewed Amanda Fox and Charles Schmidt for the position and ended up choosing Schmidt to be on the board on a unanimous vote. He will serve until Dec. 31, 2026 with that seat being on the November, 2026 ballot.

Schmidt has been very active in Brandywine Schools as a parent and volunteer for the last 20 years. He owns two local businesses, CS Ink Works and Hive Mind Media, as well as the Sandy Fern Campsite in the Baldwin area.

"All I want to do is use my resources and my time to uplift you," Schmidt told board members. "It's all about relationships and listening to everyone and everything."

For her part, Fox said her two priorities would be promoting literacy and career technical education programs. She is an administrator in the Penn Harris Madison school district but lives in Brandywine and sends her children to school here. She acknowledged that her work has kept her from being as involved in the Brandywine district as Schmidt is.

Board members praised both candidates for applying and said it was a tough choice to choose just one. Board vice-president John Jarpe joked that maybe he should resign to let both of them serve. "We're faced with a tough decision, I want you both to know that you are both very qualified people," he said.

Board member Jeremy Colby also praised both candidates. He said he liked what Fox said about literacy and CTE programs. "Then there's Mr. Schmidt who has an unbelievable involvement in the community," he said. "I like both candidates."

McKee and three other people endorsed by the "We the Parents" organization were elected to the board in 2022 and was a board officer until this year, serving both as board vice-president and board president.

Only one member of that group, Michelanne McCombs, remains on the board. Thomas Payne and Angela Seastrom resigned from the board in 2024.

McKee acknowledged some of the turmoil on the board and in the community over the last three years with their election to the board. "I took great pride in my time on the board even with the animosity that was projected towards me," she wrote in her resignation letter.

"As an alumni of Brandywine I held a great loyalty to our district until it was made clear that those that may think differently than those 'in charge' were not welcome. It's amazing that in this day and age so much hate was allowed to continue for so

See MEMBER, Page A8

CREATING COMMUNITY

Niles RadioShack transitions to Reddhill Electronics & Games

By JUSTIN FLAGEL
Leader Publications Contributor

NILES — A long running Niles retail store is transitioning business models for the second time in its decades-long existence.

Reddhill Electronics & Games has been located in downtown Niles for the past year after moving from its previous location next to Martin's Super Market on South 11th Street. For most of its existence, the store has been known as the Niles RadioShack, but changes in the electronics market have pushed the store to evolve its identity.

Reddhill continues to carry an inventory of electronics, but has become more known in recent months as the local outlet

See REDDHILL, Page A8

JUSTIN FLAGEL | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Reddhill Electronics & Games owner Dylan Roberts poses inside his store's location at 105 E. Main St. in downtown Niles.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLES NELSON

Downtown Niles hosts NODE by NODEwest music festival

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — A new festival is bringing evenings full of adventure, music and festive fun to downtown Niles this weekend.

Niles Main Street is inviting the community to its inaugural NODE By NODEwest event taking place Thursday, Friday and Saturday night at the Niles Outdoor Dining Experience. The three-day music festival will feature a variety of genres ranging from classic rock, country, Americana and more.

NODE By NODEwest lineup
Thursday (6 to 9 p.m.)

• Drew Stolz & Priscilla Sab, an acoustic duo known for playing festivals, venues, and events across the region and

See NODE, Page A8

OBITUARIES

Leo Charles Goss Sr.
Shina Murmu
Mary Anne Stilwell
Michael Harrington
Julia E. Wright
Carole Ann Bronicki
E. Donald Paulson
Norma R. Truesdell
Edwin G. Johnson III
A6

FRANKLY
TIPS, QUIPS, AND BLIPS

"Buchanan! When the downtown work is done, you will love the results. Local businesses, please hang on!" A2

Hall of Famer Mark Nate returns to guide Dowagiac baseball program B1

FRANKLY

TIPS, QUIPS, AND BLIPS

What is Frankly? It is where readers sound off on issues of the day. Have a tip, quip or blip? Call or text Frankly at 219-455-2349 or email rich.cains@leaderpub.com

As a Republican, I am disappointed that Pam Bondi has not released the full Epstein report. Americans were promised it would be. Where is the openness that we all deserve?

Putin is not going to stop fighting until F-35s start dropping their payloads on his mansions. How many countries must we allow him to invade before we are fully on board on protecting those who cannot protect themselves?

If the county and state really wanted to do it right, Hwy 12 should have been made into four lanes with a center turning lane. Unfortunately, there is no stopping the speeders on this road.

Is it just me or did other people feel this was a very lackluster 4th of July? It's hard to feel patriotic when our countries leaders are acting so shamefully.

Buchanan! When the downtown work is done, you will love the results. Local businesses, please hang on!

Please watch out for motorcycles. Car vs. motorcycle is never a good ending. And, to the riders, please quit speeding and weaving in between traffic. Zooming around is dangerous in a busy city.

Why have so many people given up on church attendance? Is it the donations? Relevance to modern life? Church's need to better market themselves to the outside audience and be disciples of men and women. People need to experience the joys a nd spiritual growth built in the church community.

Thank you to the three teenagers who helped push my car off the road on Saturday. Your kindness is very appreciated and your parents should be proud of you. I sure am.

I'm troubled by all of the lawsuits taking place in our state and federal government. We are a nation of laws and we should simply follow the laws or change them through the lawmaking process, not by a rubber stamp.

WEATHER

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
70% Chance of Storms	Partly Cloudy	50% Chance of Storms	40% Chance of Storms	Partly Cloudy	30% Chance of Rain
84° 70°	82° 65°	83° 68°	86° 72°	93° 73°	90° 71°

SUBMITTED LEADER PUBLICATIONS

ABOVE: Chris Williams installs a scavenger hunt graphic along the river.

RIVERFRONT SCAVENGER HUNT

CELEBRATES NILES' INDIGENOUS HISTORY

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — Stationed along the St. Joseph River is a new activity designed to both honor and recognize the rich Indigenous history of the Niles area.

The River Essence Group and the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi recently collaborated to install an interactive scavenger hunt along the riverfront trail in downtown Niles. The REG is a nonprofit organization founded to enhance the economic and social vitality of the Niles community.

The scavenger hunt, which begins near the amphitheater, features a wide variety of native animals that hold significance to the Pokagon Band. Community members can then walk along the riverfront trail to find graphics for each animal.

"A lot of the animals here are actually clans of ours," said Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Language Specialist Kyle Malott. "Eagle, bear, wolf, turtle – those are heavily prevalent clans within our band. We have food sources in the beaver and the muskrat. We did a lot of trapping and training with the French with otters and beavers. With a lot of these birds and everything there's stories behind them that we have, too, so those are important to us to keep on as well."

REG President Vikki Jurgonski approached the Pokagon Band about the project with the goal of creating an engaging event that both highlights the river and the Pokagon Band's rich history in Niles.

"Everyone is looking for a family-friendly activity," Jurgonski said. "I think this brings everything together because it's something for families to do. Plus, it's showing the history that we're missing that we need to talk about more."

"River Essence did a great job partnering with the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi to bring this project to life," said Niles Mayor Nick Shelton. "This is such a creative and meaningful way to honor the history of the tribe, highlight their language, and share it with the community. It gets kids exploring, families moving, and reminds us all that Riverfront Park is more than just a nice place to walk. It's a place with a story."

Jurgonski reached out to Malott, who provided her with a list of animals to be featured in the scavenger hunt. Next Gen Graphics then designed and produced the graphics and with the help of volunteer Chris Willliams, the graphics were installed along the river.

The Niles area is known to the Potawatomi as Pawating, which means "place of the rapids" and the St. Joseph

See HUNT, Page A6

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

TOP: The River Essence Group and the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi recently collaborated to install an interactive scavenger hunt along the riverfront trail in downtown Niles. From left: Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Language Specialist Kyle Malott, River Essence Group president Vikki Jurgonski, Niles Mayor Nick Shelton.

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227 S. Front Street
Dowagiac, MI 49047

Cass Family Clinic hosts ribbon-cutting for new mobile health clinic

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

CASSOPOLIS — Cass Family Clinic hosted a ribbon-cutting event Tuesday for its new Mobile Health Clinic.

The event took place at Cass Family Clinic's Cassopolis location, 261 M-62 North. A rally supporting the clinic and condemning incoming Medicaid cuts took place at the same time.

Cass Family Clinic is launching the Mobile Health Clinic to better serve the residents of Southwest Michigan. The year-round Mobile Health Clinic will offer health and wellness exams, sports physicals, substance use disorder behavioral therapy, acute musculoskeletal issues, blood pressure checks, influenza vaccinations, patient education, and other medical resources.

"At Cass Family Clinic, our goal is to ensure that residents have access to quality healthcare – no matter where they are," said Cass Family Clinic CEO Joe Gavan. "The Mobile Health Clinic allows us to deliver care in a new and innovative way, reaching patients who might otherwise face challenges accessing services. We're deeply grateful for the generous support of Corewell Health, which makes it possible to bring these vital resources to communities across Southwest Michigan."

"We are proud to partner with Cass Family Clinic to bring high-quality care closer to home for individuals and families," said Natalie Baggio, president of Corewell Health in Southwest Michigan. "Access to care is the foundation of a healthy community. By working together to reach rural areas through mobile services, we're helping ensure that every resident, regardless of location, has the opportunity to live a healthier life."

Cass Family Clinic has also been awarded $250,000 for over five years from the Cass County Opioid Settlement Fund, a grant approved by the Cass County Board of Commissioners, to help fund the Mobile Health Clinic.

The Mobile Health Clinic will be on tour July 16-25, visiting various communities, including Niles, Marcellus, Jones, Vandalia, Dowagiac and Edwardsburg.

The Mobile Health Clinic services are available to anyone in the community, not just Cass Family Clinic patients. Residents may register as a Cass Family Clinic patient at the Mobile Health Clinic. Medicaid and most other insurance plans are accepted. For those without insurance, a sliding fee payment scale based on income and family/household size is available.

The Mobile Health Clinic will operate Monday through Thursday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Scheduled and walk-in appointments will be available.

Protesters rally against Medicaid cuts

Roughly a dozen people gathered at Cass Family Clinic Tuesday to support the clinic and condemn Congressman Tim Walberg and his role in voting for the 'Big Beautiful Bill, which was signed into law by President Donald Trump on the Fourth of July.

Proponents of the bill believe it will fuel growth and cut waste and fraud in programs like Medicaid while speakers at the protest said the bill will cut back on healthcare in rural communities like Cass County, leaving residents vulnerable.

"We're here because we support this place," Many of us are patients here and have family that are patients here. We are here because we find it quite hypocritical that Mr. Walberg, who voted for the incoming Medicaid cuts, supports the clinic even though he just voted to make drastic cuts to Medicaid, which are going to hurt the people who are actually patients here. We felt it was important to come out and make a statement."

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Cass Family Clinic hosted a ribbon-cutting event with community leaders for its new Mobile Health Clinic on Tuesday, July 15, its Cassopolis location. The year-round Mobile Health Clinic will offer health and wellness exams, sports physicals, substance use disorder (SUD) behavioral therapy, acute musculoskeletal issues, blood pressure checks, influenza vaccinations, patient education, and other medical resources.

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Roughly a dozen people gathered at Cass Family Clinic Tuesday to support the clinic and condemn Congressman Tim Walberg and his role in voting for the 'Big Beautiful Bill.

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BEACON HEALTH SYSTEM

Vandalia hosts annual Underground Railroad Days

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

VANDALIA — Visitors to Cass County over the weekend got a glimpse into history through the Underground Railroad Society of Cass County's annual Underground Railroad Days.

The Village of Vandalia and the Underground Railroad Society of Cass County hosted the annual Underground Railroad Days Saturday and Sunday, July 12 and 13 with activities centered around Milo Barnes Park on M-60 in Vandalia.

Hundreds of people visited the event that celebrates the legacy of the Underground Railroad in Cass County, particularly the area around Vandalia – Calvin, Porter and Penn Townships – known as "Young's Prairie" at the time. The UGRR existed in this area from 1830 to 1860 and it is estimated about 1,500 fugitive slaves passed through this area on their way to Canada. Many stayed for a time and worked on Quaker farms. They were targets of the infamous 1847 Kentucky Slave Raid.

The URSCC sponsored guided tours of Kentucky Raid sites and tours of UGRR sites James E. Bonine House, the Bonine Carriage House, the Stephen Bogue House and Brownsville School No. 1, an integrated one-room schoolhouse believed to have opened in the early 1840s that was recently acquired by URSCC. The schoolhouse is thought to be one of the longest-running integrated schoolhouses in the country, having served students from the early 1840s to 1956, when Brownsville students were consolidated into Cassopolis Public Schools.

Volunteers recently added a new roof and repaired the foundation and floor. The floor was retooled using wood from the Bonine grocery store and gas station, another related historical site that was operated by the family of abolitionists. Visitors to the building will be able to view the restorations, as well as photographs and information about Brownsville and Cass County's many integrated, one-room, public schools.

The 102nd US Colored Troops Company No. 2 presented a "living history" encampment. The regiment – made up entirely of volunteers from Michigan and Canada – featured 845 Michigan men, more than 100 of which from Cass County. The regiment had additional artillery and cavalry units.

The regiment was organized as the 1st Michigan Colored Volunteer Infantry Regiment in Detroit on February 29, 1864. 102nd US Colored Troops Company No. 2 volunteer Joe Imhoff has been participating in the event for years and enjoys the experience.

"It's nice to be able to share our history with the Underground Railroad and this area," he said. "It's also teaching me because I learn more about the history of this place every time I come here. It's important to keep this history alive."

The Youth Center featured the documentary "Young's Prairie: UGRR and its Legacy in Cass Co, MI" and each day at Brownsville School, Kathy Johnson took on the persona of an 1850s one-room school teacher, reenacting the story of the Widow White, who went to work teaching in 1850 after her husband died.

Additional information on the URSCC's work, as well as information on donating to their efforts, can be found at urscc.org and friendsofbrownsvilleschool.org.

Niles History Center awarded America250MI grant

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — The America250MI Committee has awarded the Niles History Center $4,750 for its efforts to preserve Niles' stories for future generations.

The Niles City Council authorized the Niles History Center to accept the grant during Monday's meeting. The grant will cover the costs of restoring iron artifacts found at Fort St. Joseph and pay for a banner explaining the site's connection to the American Revolution.

The America250MI History Grant Program is funding projects that will help preserve Michigan's history for future generations. The grant program represents a key element of the state's commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

In 2020, Governor Whitmer directed the Historical Society of Michigan and the Michigan History Center to coordinate the state's commemoration of the anniversary of the founding of the United States of America. The two organizations created the America250MI Committee to aid and advise the effort.

Council also accepted a quote from Double M Painting Services of Dowagiac in the amount of $9,670 to complete Phase three of painting at the Chapin Mansion, with the expense being covered by a grant.

The History Center has received a private grant in the amount of $25,000 for painting upstairs at the Chapin Mansion. The rooms have not been painted since City Hall moved out in 2012. City officials believe the walls and ceilings need painting; there are stains, chips and shadowing left from modern office fixtures. The walls are mostly white, which does not match with the home's Victorian character.

While planning for this painting, some of the original wall and ceiling murals have been uncovered. Artist Bob Cross has worked to reveal these patterns and designs. In order to preserve the murals with the hope that one day they can be restored, painting the walls and ceilings in these rooms needs to be carefully approached.

Mike Moroz of Double M painting originally recommended Bob Cross for the work of uncovering murals and has submitted this proposal. Moroz is skilled in historic house work and familiar with Cross's techniques for uncovering murals. Moroz serves as the President of the Underground Railroad Society of Cass County and is working to restore the historic Bonine House.

Moroz will work with the History Center Director to repair, paint and improve the historic appearance of the rooms while taking care not to damage or cover any of the original murals. The work is expected to take about 4-5 weeks to complete and would begin in September.

In January and April, the council approved quotes from Double M Painting Services. According to city staff, the work has been satisfactorily completed and phase three will complete the painting of the Mansion's interior.

In further business, council:

• Approved Rose Street Advisors of Kalamazoo, Michigan as the City's employee benefit broker and consultant with the cost of this service being budgeted for in the General Fund and Utility Fund budgets.

• Authorized the Police Department to purchase one Watchguard M500 digital video recorder, with hardware, from Motorola Solutions of Chicago, Illinois at a cost of $9,198.00 which has been budgeted for in the Vehicle Capital Outlay budget.

• Approved the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map notice of decision to not appeal the revised map.

• Approved a Building Official Services Agreement between the City of Niles and Scott Saunders WSS Inspections, LLC.

• Approved the January 16, 2024 International Code Council Fee Schedule.

• Approved an agreement with Cornerstone Alliance in the amount of $4,940 to participate in the countywide needs assessment along with a specific needs assessment for the City of Niles and pay the expense from the Council Contingency Fund.

• Awarded a contract to Airlux Heating and Cooling of Niles, Michigan in the amount of $4,563.00 for installation of a furnace at 603 S. 16th Street, with the expense to be covered by CDBG funds.

• Awarded a contract to Ace Plumbing and Heating of Stevensville, Michigan in the amount of $17,843 for installation of an HVAC system at 904 Regent Street, with the expense to be covered by CDBG funds.

• Awarded a contract to Ace Plumbing and Heating of Stevensville, Michigan in the amount of $7,180 for the replacement of pipes and sewer lines at 1640 Michigan Street, with the expense to be covered by CDBG funds.

• Awarded a contract to Future Construction of Watervliet, Michigan in the amount of $12,235 for a new roof and gutter repairs at 1602 Cherry Street, with the expense to be covered by CDBG funds.

• Awarded a contract to Get Busy Exteriors of Holland, Michigan in the amount of $11,000, plus $105/sheet of decking, for a new roof at 1202 N. 6th Street, with the expense to be covered by CDBG funds.

• Confirmed the appointment of Brian Thomas to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a three year term.

• Confirmed the appointment of Charles Fouche to the Parks and Recreation Board for a three year term.

• Confirmed the appointment of Brandon Townsley to the Downtown Development Authority for a term expiring December 31, 2026.

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ADMINISTRATIVE
PUBLISHER
Rich Cains
(219) 455-2349
rich.cains@leaderpub.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE & DISTRIBUTION
Amy Glover
(269)687-7717
amy.glover@leaderpub.com

EDITORIAL
MANAGING EDITOR
Maxwell Harden
231-750-5776
max.harden@leaderpub.com

ADVERTISING
Dennis Hinsey
(269) 362-1525
dennis.hinsey@leaderpub.com

DESIGN CENTER MANAGER
Allison Dale
allison.dale@leaderpub.com

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Joshua Turnock
Caitlin Schlemmer

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(269) 591-6105

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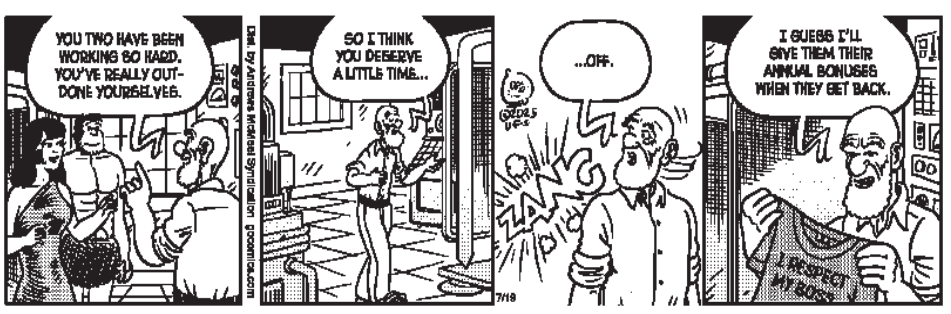
COMICS & PUZZLES

ADAM

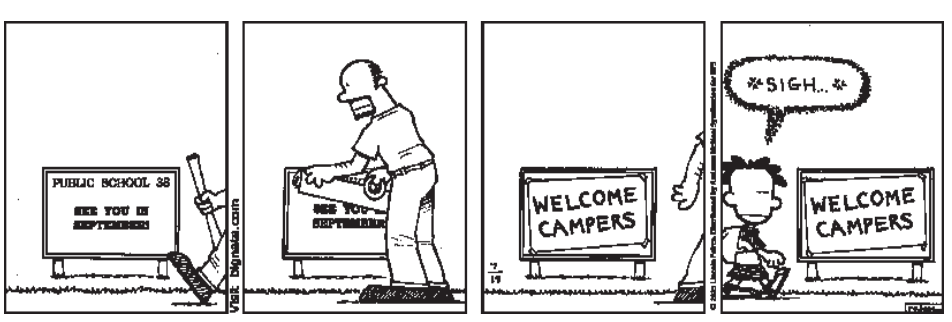
WELL. THAT WAS QUITE AN ADVENTURE.
A SHIPWRECK. GOLD DOUBLOONS. DAD STEALING OUR BOUNTY.
WE'RE GONNA GET REVENGE ON HIM. RIGHT?
YEP. I KNOW WHERE HE KEEPS HIS REESE'S MINI CUPS.
I SMELL A HEIST!!

ALLEY OOP


YOU TWO HAVE BEEN WORKING SO HARD. YOU'VE REALLY OUT-DONE YOURSELVES.
SO I THINK YOU DESERVE A LITTLE TIME...
...OFF.
I GUESS I'LL GIVE THEM THEIR ANNUAL BONUSES WHEN THEY GET BACK.

ARLO & JANIS

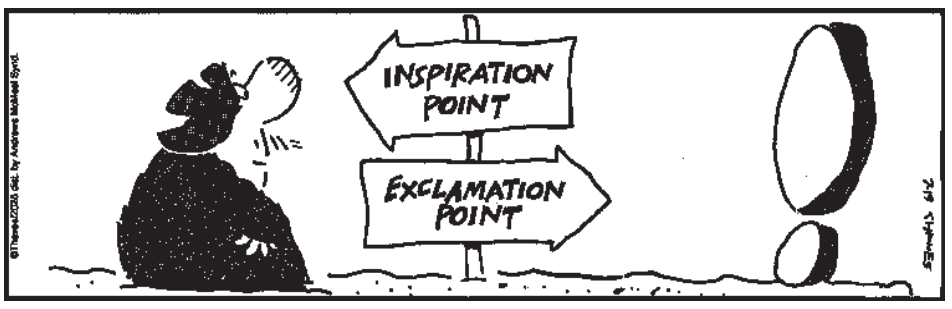
BIG NATE



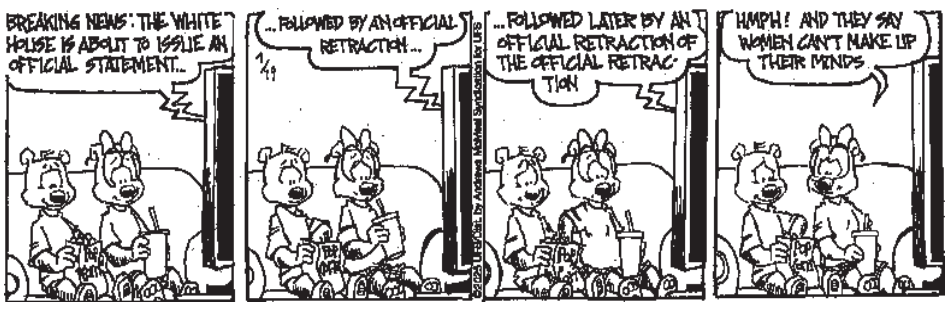
BORN LOSER

WHY ARE YOU TWO JUST SITTING THERE DOING NOTHING? THE WORLD IS YOUR OYSTER!
DO YOU THINK HE IS RIGHT ABOUT THE WORLD BEING OUR OYSTER?
I SURE HOPE NOT! HAVE YOU EVER TASTED AN OYSTER? YUCK!

FRANK & ERNEST



GRIZZWELLS


BREAKING NEWS: THE WHITE HOUSE IS ABOUT TO ISSUE AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT...
...FOLLOWED BY AN OFFICIAL RETRACTION...
...FOLLOWED LATER BY AN OFFICIAL RETRACTION OF THE OFFICIAL RETRACTION
HMPH! AND THEY SAY WOMEN CAN'T MAKE UP THEIR MINDS

THATABABY

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SODOKU PUZZLE

HOW TO PLAY: Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

DIFFICULTY RATING: 5/5

ANSWER ON PAGE 6

	5			8				7
1			3	5		8		
	8			1	7			9
5		3				7		
				9				
		4				3		5
4			1	2			5	
		5		3	4			1
9				7			4	

MODERATELY CONFUSED

REMEMBER THE GOOD OLD DAYS, WHEN STREAMING MEANT YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO WATCH COMMERCIALS?
STAHLER 7/19
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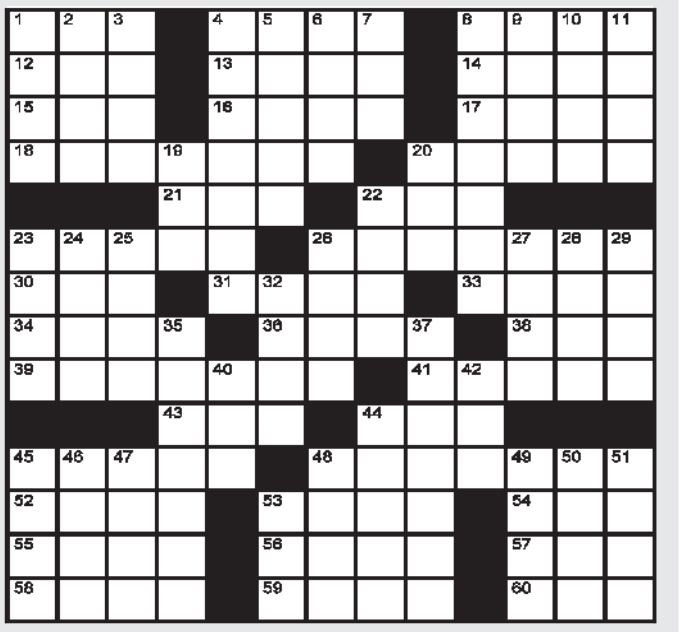
REALITY CHECK

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS
1 Move to and —
4 Bar order
8 Hit
12 Not strict
13 Mob VIP
14 Culture medium
15 Frost
16 Be compliant
17 Alliance acronym
18 Black-and-white bird
20 World-weary
21 Skill
22 Offspring
23 Move a little
26 Trips by boat
30 Inventor — Whitney
31 Speakers' platform
33 Fill
34 English queen
36 Urban dirt
38 Try for office
39 Kind of comb
41 Moon's path
43 Sprite
44 Pool stick
45 Peep
48 Soft colors
52 Traffic noisemaker
53 Frozen rain
54 Bill and —
55 — mater
56 Monstrous one
57 "— come?"
58 Ring out
59 Manage
60 Harvest deity

DOWN
1 Turn over
2 Marathon
3 Yoked farm animals
4 Scrubbed
5 Custom
6 Candid
7 Gift from Santa
8 Tropical fruits
9 "Holy cow!"
10 Tardy
11 Walked over
19 Comic's offering
20 Happiness
22 Middling (Hyph.)
23 Wall Street animal
24 Arm bone
25 Force
26 Stringed instrument
27 Things worn
28 Small case
29 Dispatched
32 "— — I cared!"
35 Unending
37 Mussed
40 Lofty mountain
42 Soak flax
44 Mound of stones
45 Guy
46 Opening
47 Shirley MacLaine role
48 Leaf
49 Repeat
50 Fly up and over
51 Does a farm job
53 Fiery

ANSWER ON PAGE 6



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BREVITY

HEART OF THE CITY

I WANT THE BOTTOM BUNK.
NO. I NEED THE BOTTOM BUNK CUZ I NEED COMPLETE DARKNESS TO FALL ASLEEP.
FINE. THEN I WANT THE DESK BY THE WINDOW.
FINE.
SEE, DANA, COMPROMISE ISN'T THAT BAD!
I SOUND LIKE MY MOM...

DEATH NOTICES

Leo Charles Goss Sr., 92, of Niles, Michigan, passed away on Monday, July 14, 2025. Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Shina Murmu, 63, of Berrien Springs, Michigan, passed away on July , 10, 2025. Services will be July 20, 2025, 1030 am Michiana Fil-Am SDA church. Arrangements entrusted to Allred Funeral Home.

Mary Anne Stilwell, 78, of Sodus, passed away on July 9, 2025 at her home. Arrangements are pending with and have been entrusted to Bowerman Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Michael Harrington, 67, of Berrien Springs, passed away on Tuesday, July 15, 2025 due to injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Arrangements have been entrusted to Allred Funeral Home. www.AllredFuneralHome.com

Julia E. Wright, 73, of Benton Harbor, passed away on Friday, July 11, 2025. Arrangements are pending and have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Niles. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com.

Carole Ann Bronicki, 94, passed away on Thursday, July 10, 2025, in Niles, Michigan. Arrangements have been entrusted to and are pending with Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

OBITUARIES

E. Donald Paulson

May 14, 1931
- July 12, 2025

E. Donald "Don" Paulsen, 94, a lifelong resident of Cassopolis, left this life peacefully Saturday, July 12, 2025 in the comfort of his family's presence. His life began May 14, 1931 in Cassopolis, Michigan, the older of two sons born to Edward and Kathleen Paulsen. He graduated from Cassopolis High School in 1949, and in 1950 married his high school sweetheart, Sharon Snyder. They had four children together - Donald A., Mary, Judy, and Peggy.

Don was an avid hunter and fisherman, and loved spending time with his family and friends at their cabin near Luther, Michigan. There, he shared his love of the outdoors with his children, and taught them how to take care of themselves. He wanted them to be strong, independent, and self-sufficient, and lead by example.

His true passion was being a firefighter and arson investigator with the Penn Township Volunteer Fire Department. Don spent fifty years in that capacity, and prided himself on taking training on every aspect of firefighting. As Fire Chief, he continued making improvements to the Fire Department and training the other volunteers until he was no longer able to do so. The firemen he worked with were his second family, and proudly and lovingly called him "Uncle Don."

As much as he loved the fire department, nothing was more important to him than his family. Don was happiest when they were all together, laughing, joking, and telling stories. Even in his last hours, family and friends were with him, laughing and telling stories.

Don is survived by his wife of nearly seventy-five years, Sharon Paulsen; his four children Donald A. (Cathy) Paulsen, Mary (Tom) Tinker, Judy Paulsen, and Peggy Ayers; twelve grandchildren, Rob Paulsen, Tim Paulsen, Susan (Rick) Staffen, Kathy (Kevin) Lewinski, John (Tina) Tinker, Jennifer Carnahan, Sarah (Tony) Ayers, Dylan (Heather) Ayers, Eric Carnahan, Lyndsy Paulsen, Eric (Lisa) Helfrich, Bryan (Lyndsey) Helfrich; ten great-grandchildren, Phillip Staffen, Alexandra (Alex) Lewinski, Mia Paulsen, Lexi Paulsen, Sebastian Tinker, Killian Tinker, Henry Tinker, Bianca Helfrich, Caleb Helfrich, Myles Helfrich; sister-in-law, Sara Heuer; and a host of cousins, nieces, nephews and other extended family.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Adam and Irene Greenawalt, mother and step-father, Kathleen and Earl Smith, loving brother, Dean Paulsen, and son-in-law, Bill Ayers.

Don will be laid to rest in a private family graveside service in Young's Prairie Cemetery in his beloved Penn Township.

Family and friends will gather to celebrate Don's life Wednesday, July 16, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. for a time of sharing memories and telling stories in the Penn Township Hall, 60717 South Main Street (two blocks south of M 60) in Vandalia.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Don be made to Penn Township Fire Department, c/o Penn Township, Post Office Box 69, Vandalia, Michigan 49095.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

Norma R. Truesdell

June 12, 1944
- July 14, 2025

Norma Ruth Truesdell, 81, of Niles, died peacefully Monday, July 14, 2025.Her life began June 12, 1944 in Jonesville Virginia she was born to Bud and Iva Minor. She married Kenneth Charles Truesdell, 1974 in the Hope Baptist Church in Niles.

Norma loved flowers, growing vegetables and working in her yard. She especially enjoyed traveling to Florida with her husband Kenneth and her visits in Florida with Joan. In Florida they spent time at the flea market, swimming, dancing and enjoying life.

Norma will be greatly missed by family and friends. She is survived by her husband, Kenneth Charles Truesdell of Niles; one son, Rick Hall of Jonesville, Virginia; two grandchildren; one great grandchild and her best friend who became her sister, Joan Cole.

Family and friends will gather Friday, July 18, 2:00p.m. until 4:00 p.m., in Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, 615 East Main Street, Niles. Norma will be laid to rest at a private cemetery in Jonesville, Virginia.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, Niles. Please share a memory or a message online: halbritterwickens.com.

Edwin G. Johnson III

October 21, 1954
- July 9, 2025

Edwin "Eddie" Griffin Fountain Johnson III, 70, of Cassopolis, died peacefully Wednesday, July 9, 2025 in the comfort of his family's presence.

His life began October 21,1954 in Chincoteague, Virginia the oldest of six children. He first married Victoria Delos Santos. On May 21, 2005, he married Sheena Smith Underwood, the woman who was the love of his life, in Kanley Memorial Chapel on the campus of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Eddie was a proud veteran of the United States Navy. He was aboard the USS Chicago CG-11 which carried the title of "The World's Most Powerful Guided Missile Cruiser." He also sailed the USS Sterett, a Belknap-class guided missile cruiser. He saw action in the Vietnam Conflict and the cold war and served aboard the USS Horne CG-30 cruiser. While in the Navy, he was a member of the undefeated football team, "The Subic Bay Admirals." He was referred to as "The Man from MARS" as coordinator and administrator of the Navy-Marine Corps Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS), set up by the Department of Defense to provide emergency communication times of a national disaster to link together naval activities. Eddie routinely received, screened, and transmitted messages providing communications quickly and inexpensively to family and friends back home, providing morale boosting messages.

After raising his family, he returned to school, starting from the ground up, first attending Kalamazoo Valley Community College, then attending Western Michigan University. At the age of 54, he graduated in just two and half years from Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing as the oldest student in his class and established his own criminal defense law practice: The Law Office of Edwin G. Johnson III. His family often quoted his code, "You're never too old to learn, there's no one, regardless of age, who can't learn something." He also served as a Cass County Commissioner. Eddie was a partner and vice-president of the Added Edge Group. One of his favorite things he enjoyed was talking about law, the state of the world we live in, how to make it better, and deep political conversation. Eddie would agree to disagree, being respectful of everyone's opinions, but always saying "I got work to do!"

Sheena lovingly held an annual MAK (Men Are Kings) party at their lake property on Paradise Lake in Vandalia, Michigan, affectionately calling Eddie "King Johnson," enjoying a hot, sunny day with family and friends, riding his pontoon boat, listening to Motown music (especially David Ruffin), eating good foot (rig-tips were his favorite) and playing games. Sheena would tell all the ladies at the party, "Treat your man like a king and he will treat you like a queen." And he did.

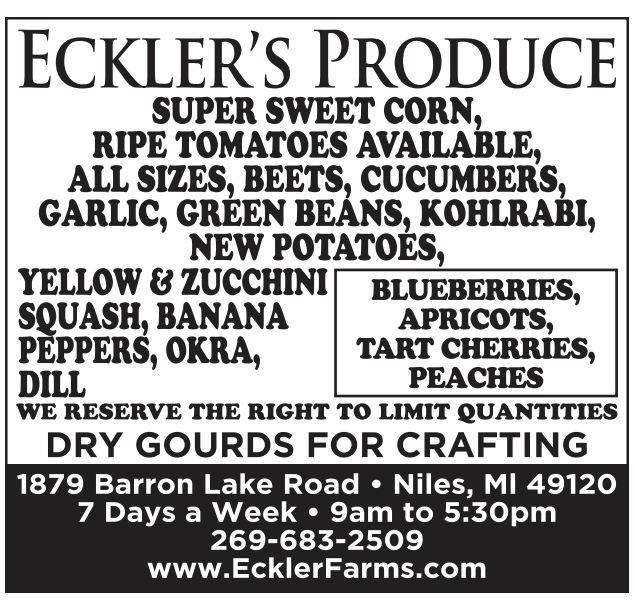
In his free time, Eddie had a passion for softball, water skiing, reading, and playing the family traditional card game "Bidwiz." Most of all, he enjoyed spending time with his blended family.

Edwin will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by his wife of twenty years, Sheena Johnson; three brothers, Malcolm (Miriam) Johnson, Randall (Beth) James, Adam (Heather) Walker; two daughters, Maria "Venus" Johnson, Janet (Lydell) Little; four sons, Edwin "E4" (Rachel) Johnson IV, Dennis (Dawn) Underwood III, Matthew (Lisa) Underwood, Curt (Tonya) Underwood; twenty-three grandchildren, Shaunte', Robert (Lauren), Chelsea (Zachary), Jasmine (Edgar), Dennis IV, "D.J." (Lily), Heather (Brent), Kiara, Hunter (Stacia), Dezarai (Zach), Aidyn (Fatima), Cameron, Mia, Karsyn, Edwin "Nickel", Jazlin, Samantha, Asher, Juliet, Alice, Kimora "Coco", Bryar, Jake; ten great grandchildren, Emmanuel "Manny", Mylah, Robert "Tre", Zoey, Avery, Amiyah, Zyaire, Flynn, Nolan, Noa; his father, Edwin Griffin Fountain (Cheryl) Johnson, Jr; and a host of nieces and nephews.

Edwin was preceded in death by his mother and step-father, Janet Carole Walker, Abraham Walker; one sister, Michelle James, one brother, Rodney James. Family and friends will gather Wednesday, July 16, 2025 from 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. in Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, 202 North Broadway Street, Cassopolis. Military Honors will begin precisely at 5:21 p.m. followed by the reading of his obituary and brief remarks by the family.

Edwin will be laid to rest in a private family ceremony at Calvin Center Cemetery in Calvin Township.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.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HUNT

Continued from page A2

river is known as Senathwen Zibe, meaning "rocky river." When city founders laid out the village plat in the late 1820s, they adopted the name Niles in honor of Hezekiah Niles, editor of the Niles Register, a Baltimore newspaper. The scavenger hunt aims to bring awareness to the Potawatomi's legacy in Niles by using their language, Bodwewadmimwe'n, on the graphics.

"Historically speaking, our band has the most prevalence in Niles," Malott said. "All of our villages were along the river here in Niles, so it's important that we're still in the area; we have a lot of tribal citizens that live in Niles so for them to be able to come down here to see Potawatomi words is pretty awesome."

"We're still in our homeland and still have an influence in the area."

The project is the second collaboration this year between Niles and the Pokagon Band, the first being the installation of a new Pawating River marker sign along the river across the street from Corewell Health Lakeland Hospital.

For everyone involved, the aim is to build on the completion of the scavenger hunt project and continue to educate community members on Niles' Indigenous history.

"It's really awesome to have that relationship between the band and Niles," Malott said. "We're still here and able to create those relationships and make our story known and be able to talk about our history from our side instead of another side as well."

"I think it's a good start," said Pokagon Band Representation Outreach Board Vice Chair Julie Dye. "It's a good start for our visibility and I would like to see it continue and bring out the history that really has been hidden."

For more information on Pawating, visit wiwkwebthegen.com.

> "Historically speaking, our band has the most prevalence in Niles. All of our villages were along the river here in Niles, so it's important that we're still in the area; we have a lot of tribal citizens that live in Niles so for them to be able to come down here to see Potawatomi words is pretty awesome. We're still in our homeland and still have an influence in the area."
>
> **— Kyle Malott, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Language Specialist**

CROSSWORD ANSWER
From Page 5

F	R	O		S	H	O	T		B	E	L	T
L	A	X		C	A	P	O		A	G	A	R
I	C	E		O	B	E	Y		N	A	T	O
P	E	N	G	U	I	N		J	A	D	E	D
			A	R	T		S	O	N			
B	U	D	G	E		V	O	Y	A	G	E	S
E	L	I		D	A	I	S		S	A	T	E
A	N	N	E		S	O	O	T		R	U	N
R	A	T	T	A	I	L		O	R	B	I	T
			E	L	F		C	U	E			
C	H	I	R	P		P	A	S	T	E	L	S
H	O	R	N		H	A	I	L		C	O	O
A	L	M	A		O	G	R	E		H	O	W
P	E	A	L		T	E	N	D		O	P	S

SUDOKU ANSWER
From Page 5

3	5	9	2	8	6	4	1	7
1	4	7	3	5	9	8	6	2
6	8	2	4	1	7	5	3	9
5	1	3	8	4	2	7	9	6
7	6	8	5	9	3	1	2	4
2	9	4	7	6	1	3	8	5
4	7	6	1	2	8	9	5	3
8	2	5	9	3	4	6	7	1
9	3	1	6	7	5	2	4	8

Area residents sentenced in Berrien County Court

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

NILES — Area residents were sentenced to prison, jail and probation Monday in Berrien County Trial Court sentences at the Niles Courthouse.

Corday Marshaun White, 37, of Niles, pleaded guilty to carrying a concealed weapon and possession of a firearm by a prohibited person and was sentenced to two concurrent terms of 14 months to five years in prison. He has credit for 60 days served and must pay $366 in fines and costs. He must forfeit the weapon.

C. White

The incident occurred May 15 in Niles.

Defense attorney Daniel French said that White is a native of Flint and learned that he had to watch out for himself at an early age. "He makes no excuses and takes full responsibility for his actions," French said. "He knows he doesn't need to carry a firearm. It was something he learned and he has to unlearn it."

French noted that White is on probation in Genessee County and will have to appear there for violating his probation.

White apologized to the court and to his family. He said he took full responsibility for his actions and is ready to move on with his life.

Berrien County Trial Court Judge Gordon Hosbein said that he had to consider a number of factors in sentencing including protecting the community and punishment.

"It seems like all your offenses have been very similar and involving weapons," he said. "You have to learn that actions have consequences."

Scott Allen Hankins, 30, of Elkhart, pleaded guilty to fleeing and eluding police and resisting and obstructing police and was sentenced to two concurrent terms of 90 days in jail. He has credit for eight days serve and must pay $326 in fines and costs.

The incident occurred July 6, 2023 in Niles Township.

Hankins

Defense attorney Robert LaBre noted that Hankins is on probation in Elkhart County for methamphetamine possession. He asked for a shorter sentence so that Hankins can continue to work and take care of his family.

Hankins said he had changed drastically during the time he spent in jail in Elkhart and found a faith in God. He said his family is now his priority and that he has gone off of social media.

Judge Hosbein said that he would give him some benefit of the doubt due to his conversion but "you have to understand that actions have consequences."

Robert Brian Hoese, 60, of Dowagiac, pleaded guilty to resisting and obstructing police and second offense drunk driving and was sentenced to 270 days in jail with credit for 101 days served on the resisting charge and $180 days in jail with credit for 98 days served on the drunk driving charge. The jail terms are concurrent. He must pay $1,483 in fines and costs.

Hoese

The incident occurred Oct. 13, 2024 in Niles Township.

French said it was pretty obvious that Hoese has a problem with alcohol and asked for a lower sentence due to his health problems. "He doesn't get in trouble every time he drinks alcohol but every time he gets in trouble it involves alcohol," he said.

"I'm sorry, I accept full responsibility," Hoese said. "I blame myself and no one else for this situation. I'm confident I can remain sober."

Judge Hosbein noted Hoese's extensive record which includes 34 misdemeanors and five felonies. "You have a long history, it doesn't seem like anything has changed," he said.

Navonea Maurese-Shemar White, 21, of Dowagiac, pleaded guilty to assault with a dangerous weapon and attempted resisting and obstructing police and was sentenced to two years probation, credit for 50 days served and $708 in fines and costs. His ghost gun was forfeited.

The incident occurred May 26 in Niles Township.

N. White

Defense attorney Carri Briseno noted that this was White's first felony offense with his only previous conviction for disturbing the peace. She said the incident was an aberration.

"I apologize, I'm deeply sorry for the pain and hurt I've caused," White said. "I take full responsibility, I want to go back to school and get my GED."

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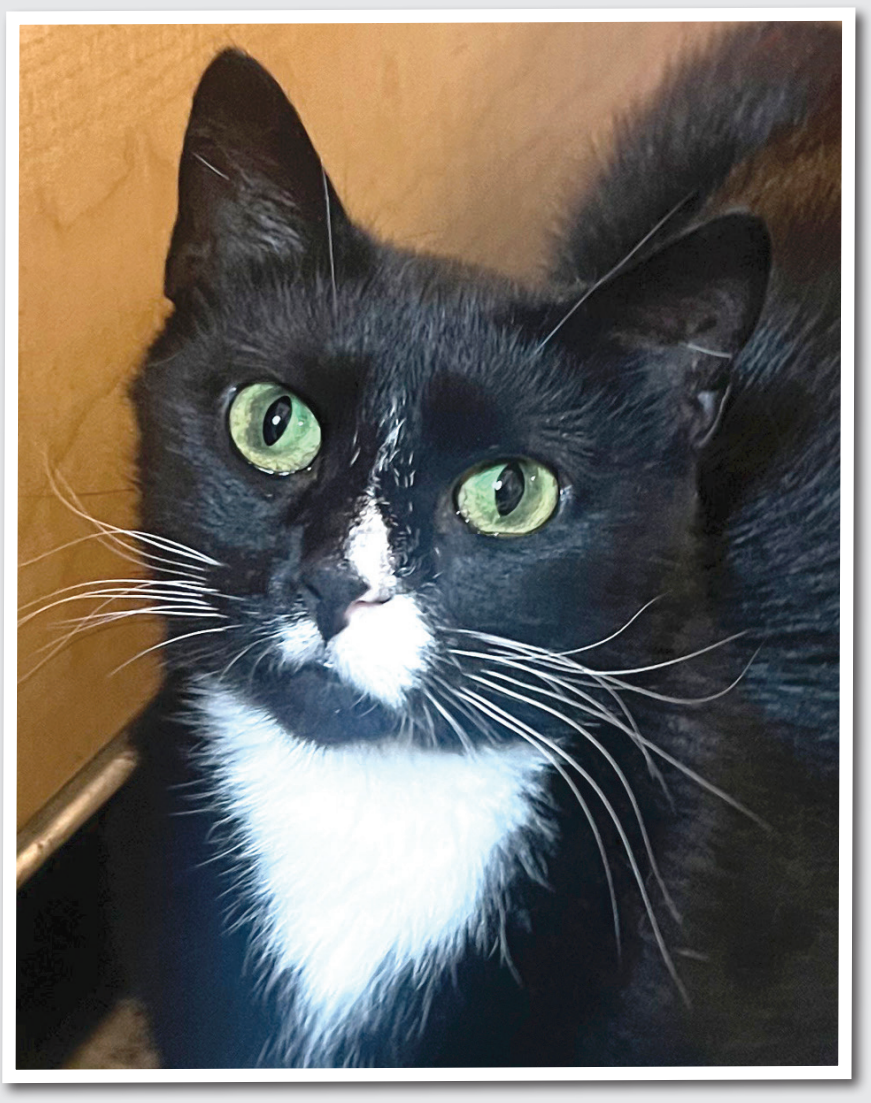
PET OF THE WEEK

Meet **Zara**, a cat with Paws of Hope. Volunteers said Zara is always up for a good conversation. She is quite the chatterbox and is not shy to ask for attention. She is sweet, playful, friendly and loves chasing toys. Zara is spayed, current shots and FeLV-FIV negative. Contact Paws of Hope at information@pawsofhope.org.



Commissioners discuss St. Joseph infrastructure project

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

ST. JOSEPH — Large construction projects can be a headache for residents, motorists and local governments as people in Niles and Buchanan can attest. Thursday, Berrien County Commissioners heard about an upcoming project in the city of St. Joseph which will affect a number of county facilities.

While the project is more than two years away, some Berrien County Commissioners are skeptical about taking a stand on the major downtown St. Joseph infrastructure project scheduled to start in the fall of 2027.

The project will include major infrastructure repairs on Main Street in St. Joseph as well as nearby side streets. Main Street is also Michigan 63 in the city and Ship and Port Streets serve as the I-94 Business Loop. The Berrien County Administration Center is on Main Street while the Courthouse and Jail are on Port Street.

Commissioners' skepticism came after Michigan Department of Transportation representative Jonathon Smith gave an overview of the project and what people can expect at the county board's Committee of the Whole meeting earlier Thursday.

Smith said the work will include the reconstruction of the entire length of Main Street from Central Avenue to the Blossomland Bridge. "We're replacing everything under the road too including the storm and sanitary sewers and the water mains as well as traffic signals and streetscaping," he said. "The concrete goes back to the 1950s."

He noted that MDOT and St. Joseph city officials have worked together on planning the project and keeping the public informed. He said people's concerns have centered on pedestrian safety which has been addressed by expanding crosswalks and putting in more traffic islands.

He said that streets will be fully closed during the construction with detours offered. Construction in the full detour areas will start in the fall of 2027 after Labor Day and be mainly completed by Memorial Day of 2028. Partial shutdowns and detours will start in the spring of 2027 and be done by the fall of 2028.

County Commissioner Jim Curran of Niles Township was the first to mention the support resolution for the MDOT project and said most of the administration committee has questions.

His main concerns with the proposed resolution center on whether the county assumes any liability by signing the resolution, whether it's been done before or would it set a precedent and whether the resolution would make the county responsible at all for what is a city and MDOT project.

Commissioner Sharon Tyler of Niles agreed. She cited all the questions and concerns involved with the recent South 11th Street/U.S. 12 Corridor project and said she pans to oppose the resolution.

She said while she's not against the St. Joseph project, she doesn't think the county should take any action which would open it to any liability. She also noted that the county will be affected by the project including the courts having to shift trials to the Niles courthouse.

County Sheriff Chuck Heit said that moving trials to Niles is the least of his concerns. "This is going to affect the county, not just the city (of St. Joseph)," he said. "Moving trials is the least of my worries. My worry is having 24 hour access to the sally port for the jail. That is a huge concern during this project, we need to stay involved."

Thursday's county board meeting also featured a recognition of the lifeguards who serve at Silver Beach County Park in honor of Lifeguard Appreciation Day which is July 31. Parks Director Jill Adams said the county employs 17 lifeguards at Silver Beach and they provide services seven days a week.

She noted that while their most important work is to prevent accidents in the water, they also make decisions on swim risks on red flag days and keeping people out of the water as well as administer first aid, educating the public, keeping watercraft out of the swim zone and reuniting lost children with parents.

In action Thursday, county commissioners approved grant agreements on emerging health threats, hazardous materials, hazardous mitigation and the health department's nurse family partnership program. They also accepted three donations to Berrien County Animal Services.

The county board's next meeting is Thursday, July 24 at the administration center. Meetings can be seen on YouTube.

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PLAN

Continued from page A1

there was nothing they could do since the car had out of state plates," she said. "Then they said there were no surveillance cameras of that area because of the downtown construction. It's unacceptable that the officer would talk to me like trash. This needs to be addressed properly."

Commissioners commiserated with her. Commissioner Raquell George thanked Hill for bringing the situation to their attention and noted that safety is the city's number one priority.

Commissioner Larry Money said he was concerned that something like that could happen on a city street. "This is not acceptable," he said. "We don't need to see those things happen in Buchanan."

In the other matter, Suzana Cvejic and Beverly Archer of Theoda Court said they opposed the commission's action earlier in the meeting to temporarily prohibit parking on Theoda and Charles Courts until the end of the downtown construction. The women said that they were not informed of the change ahead of time and they didn't think it was needed.

City Manager Tony McGhee told commissioners that people are using the two streets to get around the downtown construction. He said those streets are narrow and parking along them reduces the space available for vehicles to get through including fire trucks and emergency vehicles.

As for the construction going on downtown and in other parts of the city, McGhee said the work continues and that some downtown streets should be opening back up to traffic after Labor Day with the whole downtown open by early November.

He said the Schirmer Parkway trail extension project should be done in the next two to three weeks with contractors handling "punch list" items starting later this week. The road which goes from Niles-Buchanan Road on the south side to River Street on the north has been closed for a few months as crews install an extension of the McCoy's Creek Trail out across the river along Walton Road.

One last project is paving work on Red Bud Trail and River Street which he said is expected to be done by July 25. The

The commission's next meeting will be July 28 when there will be a public hearing on short term rental regulations.

REDDHILL

Continued from page A1

for board games, Pokemon cards, Magic: The Gathering, Dungeons & Dragons, Warhammer, dice, and other elements of "nerd culture." In addition to gaming, the store is offering LEGO kits and 3D printing supplies & services.

This is the second time the business has pivoted from one model to another. Niles Radio Shack was born out of the days of video rentals, when Video Image Inc. was approached by the Radio Shack Corporation about adding a section of consumer electronics to the store. Many of the franchise Radio Shacks that once dotted the country started in a similar manner, with video stores, hardware stores and even laundromats evolving into Radio Shacks over time. Video Image did just that, transitioning from video rentals into a full store of cell phones, small components, and other electronics. Now, the electronics are shrinking and the games are taking over the shelves.

Owner Dylan Roberts purchased the business in late 2023, without expectation for the many changes that would soon hit his store. Last year's construction on South 11th Street slowed sales for many businesses, including Radio Shack. An increase in rent and the bankruptcy of a major vendor of electronic bikes forced Dylan to realize his future was not going to look like he had imagined. The first major step was the move to Main Street.

"Downtown has a different vibe," Roberts said.

When buying the business, he had planned to add to the Radio Shack hobby experience by adding a makerspace and classes to the store. Forced by the construction to consider other options, he realized that downtown Niles was likely a better fit for that vision anyway. He describes downtown as a better location for offering community-based services and events.

JUSTIN FLAGEL | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

He had hardly moved into his new location when other challenges arose. A variety of factors were making consumer electronics more expensive, with recent tariffs increasing costs even further or making it difficult or impossible to acquire inventory. A major cell phone vendor stopped giving regular payouts to the store and, as a small business, he had little power to advocate for himself. The previously bankrupt RadioShack corporation re-emerged, but with pricing that was not competitive for a small store. Roberts was hesitant to raise prices for his customers, knowing that larger corporations were able to keep their prices low.

"I'm just a little store," he said. "I don't have the purchasing power of Amazon or Walmart or Best Buy."

The shift from the hobby culture of RadioShack to the hobby culture of gaming was somewhat natural, but it was also part of a dream Dylan had long desired.

"In a weird sense, we're kinda coming full circle," he said, describing a long held idea to open a game store in downtown Niles.

A gamer himself, Dylan had wanted to create a place to play games and connect with fellow gamers without having to leave Niles. It was that dream that pushed him to add a small shelf of Pokemon cards to his electronics store.

They sold well, so he began expanding the inventory and looking into becoming an official distributor for a variety of gaming companies. The finished basement he had planned to use for the makerspace was transformed into a gaming room. He started increasing his inventory of games and hosting events for gamers to trade cards and play games. Unexpectedly, his dream to create a place for gamers to find other games and to enjoy their shared hobby was becoming a reality.

Reddhill Electronics & Games now hosts several events, including weekly card trades, Dungeons & Dragons sessions, and Magic: The Gathering Commander nights. He's hoping to expand to events like Warhammer figurine paint nights, tournaments, and additional gaming sessions. He plans to add services like selling sports cards and offering 3D printing of figurines for Dungeons & Dragons or pieces for other games. He hopes to build a consistent group of gamers for all events.

The change has not been without some pushback from customers seeking RadioShack services. Roberts emphasized that, while he was minimizing his stock of electronics, he still offers a small supply and will continue to help those customers with their electronic needs. He's also offering discounts on many electronic items in hopes to make additional space for games.

He's also received several positive responses from newer gaming customers and even a few who came looking for electronics.

He told the tale of a Radio Shack customer who came to the store during one of the first card trade events. The customer asked what was going on and, after Dylan described Pokemon trading and the similarity to sports cards of opening packs and potentially finding valuable cards, the man bought multiple packages. The gamers gathered around as the man began to open packs, finding nothing of value. All trading ceased while the man continued looking through his purchase. Finally, on his last package, he opened it to find a high value card.

"Everyone just lost their minds," said Roberts. "It was such a cool community moment."

In the end, whether its electronics or gaming, Roberts wants his store to connect to the community.

"I just want it to be a good, positive place in the community to play and hang out," he said.

Information on Reddhill Electronics and Games can be found at reddhill.com or by searching "Reddhill Electronics & Games" on Facebook.

MEMBER

Continued from page A1

long- so much so that I could not really even feel comfortable in my children's schools or attending their activities."

"I would like to encourage you to ask questions when they arise, stand up for ALL families in the district and to be aware of those that are in power and how they are treating other staff, students, and families," she wrote. "It is not the same for all. I hope there is never again a time at Brandywine when adults lie to children and have them do their bidding at board meetings- I think that was the saddest part of all of this."

"I wish you all well, and I do think there are great things happening at Brandywine- just don't be afraid to embrace or challenge the things that are not," she concluded.

Also Monday, school board members discussed a number of topics that will be acted on at the board's next meeting on Aug. 11. Those items include substitute teacher pay, bread and milk bids and student handbooks.

Board members will also take up a request to put a 10 year, one mill sinking fund renewal on the November ballot. Superintendent Travis Walker said the current sinking fund expires this year in some townships and next year in others.

He said the money collected from the sinking fund can be used in a number of areas such as the purchase of real estate, construction or repair of school buildings, acquisition or upgrading of technology and the acquisition, repair and maintenance of transportation vehicles.

Most recently, the district used the sinking fund proceeds for the gym floor project so that it could be replaced without using general fund dollars and taking money away from student learning services.

Board members approved joining the Berrien County Insurance Consortium with six other school districts in the county. Walker said that the goal is to allow districts to get better insurance rates with the consortium having a total of 500 employees. He said the Brandywine District Education Association has signed off on the plan.

NODE

Continued from page A1

Chicagoland.

Friday (6 to 9 p.m.):

• The Erly, an Americana rock band that's built a huge following.

Saturday (5 to 10 p.m.):

• Hey Annie, who blend Americana, classic rock, and cross-generational favorites.

• Hank Nelson (aka The Man, aka The Singin' Gritter), bringing soulful covers and timeless classics.

• Touch of Texas, a crowd favorite playing country, southern rock and beyond.

NODE By NODEwest was created by the DDA NODE Committee, a group of volunteers including downtown business owners and musicians, after witnessing the success of events taking place at the NODE since its reintroduction.

"We'd seen the grand opening, the markets, Third Thursdays, and the FriYAY events really work in the space," said Niles Mayor and DDA NODE Committee member Nick Shelton. "The energy was already there. From that momentum, the idea for a music festival came together."

Thanks to support from a Michigan Arts & Culture Council grant, the committee was able to fund the programming and build a lineup of local and regional talent.

"It's all about letting the space live up to its potential," Shelton said.

The NODE is the new outdoor gathering space in downtown Niles, built on a former section of 2nd Street. First appearing during the COVID-19 pandemic as a safe space for outdoor gathering, the NODE became a celebrated part of the community, leading to the permanent construction. Features include a fireplace, overhead lighting, tables and chairs for seating and a stage area for performances. The NODE exists within the boundaries of Niles' social district, meaning guests can drink to-go alcoholic beverages sold by approved businesses in the space.

Shelton noted that businesses have felt the impact of the NODE's presence.

"The NODE isn't just a closed street in downtown Niles. It's a magnet," Shelton said. "I keep hearing it… when there's something happening at the NODE, people come downtown, and businesses feel it. Foot traffic increases. People stick around longer. They grab a bite to eat, shop, hang out, maybe grab a drink or ice cream or froyo. And that all adds up. Some businesses have told us they've had record-breaking days tied to NODE events.

"So while the NODE is a place to gather, the real goal is to boost the downtown economy. We want people to enjoy the space, but also spend their dollars in Niles."

Shelton noted that Niles has become a trailblazer in the county and the region for having an outdoor dining area downtown. He looks forward to the festival and thanked the Niles community for supporting the NODE.

"The NODE started as a pilot project. A temporary, flexible space, meant to test ideas without a massive investment," he said. "It followed the 'lighter, quicker, cheaper' philosophy and what's come from it is better than we expected. It's become part of the identity of downtown Niles. For me, it shows what's possible when a city tries something different and the community runs with it. We were trailblazers during the pandemic and we've capitalized on the idea that the more we can do to drive people downtown, the better it will be for all of Niles.

Node by Node West takes that to another level," Shelton continued. "This is a multi-day music festival, built by locals, for locals, and it continues to evolve. I'm incredibly thankful for all the volunteers, the DDA board, committee members, business owners who are thinking creatively, and even the folks helping pick up trash after events. Everyone plays a part. And I'm especially grateful for the people who are showing up, having fun, and supporting our downtown."

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NOTICE - PUBLIC LAND AUCTION
The Cass County Treasurer will offer tax-reverted real estate at public auction online at **www.tax-sale.info.**
The first auction will be held on **August 27th, 2025 from 10:00am to 7:00pm EDT.** Bids can also be placed up to 30 days in advance on the website. Assistance is available for those without computer or internet access.
Incomplete or voided sales from the August 27th, 2025 auction, if any, will be reoffered on September 26th, 2025 from 10:00am to 7:00pm EDT.
Unsold tax reverted real estate from either of the previous auctions, if any, will be re-offered on October 31st, 2025 in a sealed-bid auction. All bids must be placed by 7:00 pm EDT for this final sealed-bid auction.
Answers to common questions about the auction process and additional information can be found at **www.tax-sale.info/faq**
For more information and to view a list of the properties being offered, please visit **www.tax-sale.info** or call 1-800-259-7470. Auction listings may also be available at the County Treasurer's office.

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FOOTBALL

MHSAA Member High Schools Report Highest Participation Since 2018-19

COMMUNITY REPORT

LANSING — MHSAA member high schools reported a combined participation of 275,684 athletes in MHSAA-sponsored tournament sports during the 2024-25 school year – the highest number of participants in those activities since 2018-19 and despite another decrease in combined enrollment across those 754 schools.

This past year's participation total was 5,020 students – or 1.9 percent – higher than in 2023-24, while enrollment at member schools fell by 1.3 percent. Boys participation was up 1.9 percent to 161,329 – also its highest since 2018-19 – and girls participation was up 1.8 percent to 114,355, its highest count since 2019-20. MHSAA participation totals count students once for each sport in which they participate, meaning students who are multiple-sport athletes are counted more than once.

Two sports set participation records during 2024-25. Boys track & field counted 24,759 participants – a 3.7 percent increase from a year ago in breaking its previous record from 2005-06. Girls lacrosse participation was up 0.9 percent from last year to 3,970 participants in setting a record for the second-straight season.

Another 15 sports saw participation increases this past school year. Girls tennis saw an increase of 6.4 percent to 9,485 athletes, followed by boys and girls wrestling's combined increase of 5.2 percent to 12,422 participants –

See REPORT, Page B2

FILE | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

WRESTLING

Buchanan's Walter to wrestle for SMC

Courtesy of SMC Athletics

DOWAGIAC — Kaitlynne Walter, a 2022 graduate of Buchanan High School, has signed her NJCAA Letter of Intent to wrestle for Coach Todd Hesson and the Roadrunners during the 2025-2026 season.

Hesson said of Walter, "Kaitlynne is a hard-working wrestler who is excited to be back on the mat and competing for SMC."

As a Buck, Walter had a 14-16 record, placing third in regionals and fourth in the state MHSAA meet. She earned all-state honors and won the Coaches' Award for Outstanding Wrestler. Walter joins Nyisha Gindelberger and Ja'Niya Howard of South Bend Riley, Orion Ennis of Gobles, Madisyn Harrison of Marcellus, Aurelia Trowbridge of Buchanan, Grayce Swanson of Plainwell and current SMC student Alyse Koss in the growing 2024-25 recruiting class.

In April 2024, SMC's Board of Trustees unanimously approved the addition of Women's Wrestling, Men's Track & Field and Women's Track & Field as official NJCAA sports, to start competition in Fall 2025. Only 29 other NJCAA schools nationally currently offer women's wrestling. SMC will be the first two-year college in Michigan to offer the sport.

On April 9, the college announced the construction of a new 11,195 square-foot wing of the Zollar Building that will quadruple the space available to the men's and women's wrestling teams. It will double the mat capacity for practice sessions and provide additional competition space for hosting conference and regional meets. The new facility will also include a dedicated fitness and warm-up area, coaches' offices, locker rooms and additional restrooms. A groundbreaking ceremony was held in May, on-site work is well underway with occupancy targeted for February 2026.

BASEBALL

Dowagiac slugger blasts 4 home runs at Hartford All Stars Tournament

COMMUNITY REPORT

DOWAGIAC — Nolan Lawrence of the Dowagiac Youth Baseball Softball Association (DYBSA) U-10 All Stars turned heads at the recent Hartford All Stars Tournament with a strong performance at the plate, showcasing both power and consistency.

Over the course of the tournament, Lawrence hit 10 of13 and launched four home runs – including three that came on the very first pitch of the game. The young standout also added three doubles to his stat line, driving in nine runs and scoring eight times himself as he helped lead the DYBSA squad to a 2-2 record.

Now riding a wave of momentum, the DYBSA U-10 All Stars are preparing for back-to-back weekends of tournament play. They'll head to Coloma this weekend before taking the field at the Howard Township tournament next weekend.

With Lawrence locked in and the team building chemistry, the All Stars are poised for another strong showing as summer tournament season heats up.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KATIE CROSS | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

BASEBALL

SUBMITTED
LEADER PUBLICATIONS
MARK NATE

'I'VE ALWAYS BLED ORANGE AND BLACK'

Hall of Famer Mark Nate returns to guide Dowagiac baseball program

By Scott Hassinger
Leader Publications Contributor

DOWAGIAC — Following a lengthy and successful stint coaching baseball at Lakeshore, Dowagiac native Mark Nate has returned to his roots.

Mark Nate, a 1989 Dowagiac Union High School graduate, was hired Tuesday to replace Keith Schreiber, who recently resigned after guiding the Chieftains' fortunes on the diamond the past eight seasons.

"My wife [Joanne] and I recently moved back here to Dowagiac. I've been away from coaching for a couple years and realized how much I missed being on the field with the kids. Now I'm really looking forward to being able to give back to the community through coaching. I'm in this 100 percent for the kids and I've always bled Orange and Black," said Mark Nate, who has previously coached Little League and Travel Baseball teams in Dowagiac.

Mark and Joanne Nate have six children and seven grandchildren.

Mark Nate spent 18 seasons as head varsity baseball coach at Stevensville-Lakeshore posting an overall record of 436-199, including six Southwestern Michigan Athletic Conference titles, along with nine district and six regional titles. The Lancers captured two Division 2 state championships under Nate, beating Bay City John Glen 1-0 in the 2017 state final and repeating the feat in 2018 with a 6-3 title-clinching win over Saginaw Swan Valley. Nate's 2021 Lancers' squad finished state runners-up after losing to Orchard Lake St. Mary's.

The cousin of Brent Nate, Dowagiac's athletic director, Mark Nate was inducted into the Michigan Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2024. He was named District Coach of the Year nine times (2008, 2010, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023); Regional Coach of the Year six times (2008, 2010, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2021; Division 2 State Coach of the Year (2017 and 2018) and Michigan High School Baseball Coaches Association's Coach of the Year for all Divisions in 2021.

"Mark is a member of the Hall of Fame and we're extremely pleased to have him here at Dowagiac," Brent Nate said. "He brings instant credibility and understands that you have to do all the little things correctly in order to win. Not only are we excited to see what he can bring to the baseball program, but our athletic program as a whole. He fits perfectly with the culture we are trying to build around the board with our sports programs here at Dowagiac."

VOLLEYBALL

Lakeshore's Arney chooses SMC

Courtesy of SMC Athletics

DOWAGIAC — Maggie Arney of Lakeshore High School and Dunes Volleyball Club has signed her NJCAA Letter of Intent to play volleyball in the 1st Source Bank Fieldhouse for Head Coach Jenny Nate and the Roadrunners.

Nate said of Arney, "Maggie is a 6'0" middle- and right-side hitter who not only has height on the net but also comes with incredible attacking intelligence, sees the court, is a great blocker, and brings positive energy and excitement to our team. Maggie has extensive experience as she comes from a strong Lakeshore program and played for Dunes Volleyball Club on their top teams. Not only is she a leader on the court but in the classroom as well, which helps us continue to build the culture we want here at SMC. We are thrilled to welcome Maggie to SMC Volleyball and know she will be an asset to our program."

Lakeshore Coach Debbie Watson added, "Maggie is a great asset to any team because along with her skill set, she brings great volleyball knowledge and court awareness. She is also a great teammate. I think she's going to do a great job at SMC this fall!"

Arney is the eighth member of the 2025 SMC Volleyball class, joining Emma Hull of LaPorte, Lily Kowalik of St. Joseph, Ashanti Bonner of Elkhart, Purdue Northwest transfer Amie Schutz of Valparaiso, Sophia Bachman and Isabella Tibbles of Buchanan and Meah Evans of Constantine as new players on the Roadrunners squad.

FOOTBALL

Wagner nominated for Allstate AFCA Good Works Team

Courtesy of Notre Dame Athletics

SOUTH BEND — Junior offensive lineman Aamil Wagner has been selected as a nominee for the 2025 Allstate AFCA Good Works Team, which recognizes commitment to community service and leadership off the field.

Wagner, an Ohio native, is one of 197 nominees for the honor. The final roster of the 2025 Good Works Team will be announced in September and will consist of 22 football student-athletes and one honorary head coach. In 2024, Irish linebacker Jack Kiser was selected to the Good Works Team and Notre Dame Dick Corbett Head Football Coach Marcus Freeman was named the team's honorary head coach for their efforts in the community.

Wagner leads initiatives to improve the lives of athletes off the field, from youth athletics to collegiate student-athletes. He is heavily involved in the leadership of player development initiatives at Notre Dame which support in the areas of goal-setting, relationship-building, networking, leadership, financial planning and performance.

He also serves as the president of the Notre Dame chapter of Uplifting Athletes, an organization which supports the rare disease community and their families through local outreach, events and fundraising. Through the organization, Wagner has planned events and stayed in direct contact with families.

In addition, he is a regular volunteer at his local senior center, homeless shelter and church. He has also worked with Just a Pair of Shoes, which provides community youth a new pair of shoes, near his hometown. On campus, Wagner is a member of the Student-Athlete Advisory Council and Notre Dame Christian Athletes.

In 2024, Wagner was honored with the 2024 Notre Dame Football Scholar-Athlete Award and started all 16 games for the Irish en route to a National Championship appearance.

ALLSTATE AFCA
GOOD WORKS TEAM
The award recognizes college football athletes and an honorary coach each season for their unwavering commitment to community service and their "good works" off the field.
AAMIL 59
WAGNER
NOMINEE

BASEBALL

Continued from page B1

with boys wrestling participation up 3 percent and girls up an incredible 24 percent to 1,505 athletes. Girls track & field (18,108 athletes) and boys cross country (8,209) also saw some of the largest jumps at 4.5 and 4.1 percent, respectively.

Also reporting increased participation during 2024-25 were boys tennis (3.7 percent, 6,163 total athletes), football (3 percent, 36,210), girls volleyball (2.9 percent, 19,679), boys golf (2.7 percent, 7,416), girls competitive cheer (2.4 percent, 6,319), boys basketball (1.7 percent, 20,541), girls cross country (1.4 percent, 6,826), boys soccer (1.1 percent, 14,112), boys bowling (1 percent, 4,333), boys swimming & diving (0.9 percent, 4,073), and girls soccer (0.7 percent, 11,090).

Although 11 sports saw participation decreases during 2024-25 from the previous school year, those for girls basketball (-0.4 percent) and boys ice hockey (-0.7 percent) were lower than the 1.3-percent enrollment decline at MHSAA member schools.

Football remains the most popular sport in terms of participation at MHSAA member high schools, with that total of 36,210 athletes its highest since 2017-18. Girls volleyball remained the most popular girls sport in 2024-25, with its 19,679 athletes the highest total since 2012-13.

The participation figures are gathered annually from MHSAA member schools to submit to the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) for compiling of its national participation survey.

GYMNASTICS

Plocki retires as UM women's gymnastics coach, Kanewa-Hermelyn named replacement

Kanewa-Hermelyn elevated to head coach of women's gymnastics program

Courtesy of Michigan Athletics

ANN ARBOR — Bev Plocki announced on Wednesday that she is retiring after 36 seasons at the helm of the University of Michigan women's gymnastics program.

Athletic director Warde Manuel announced Wednesday that Maile'ana Kanewa-Hermelyn has been named the head women's gymnastics coach. During her tenure, Plocki has transformed the program into a consistent national powerhouse, winning the program's first-ever national title in 2021. She has led the Wolverines to 26 Big Ten championships -- the most by any coach, in any sport -- in Big Ten history. She has also guided the squad to eight Big Ten regular-season titles, 26 NCAA Championship appearances and 10 NCAA Super Six berths. Plocki's coaching tree has seen numerous student-athletes and assistant coaches go on to coach at the NCAA level, including seven head coaches at the nation's top programs across the country.

"It's hard to put into words what this moment means to me," said Plocki. "At 23 years old, I was just a young woman with a passion for gymnastics and a dream, when three incredible leaders -- Bo Schembechler, Jack Weidenbach and Phyllis Ocker -- took a chance on me. They believed in me before I had proven anything, and because of their faith, I've had the privilege of spending my entire career here at the University of Michigan." Plocki said. "It's been the journey of a lifetime, but let me be clear, I did not do this alone. I've had the honor of working alongside some of the most amazing assistant coaches in the country -- coaches who challenged me, inspired me and gave their all to this program. A special thank you to Don Shepherd, whose vision and generosity gave us one of the best practice facilities in the country, and who has continuously helped elevate our program in countless ways. To my husband Jim -- your quiet strength and unwavering support have been my rock. You did whatever needed to be done to allow me the freedom to lead this program with everything I had. To my children, Elizabeth and Tyler -- I can't say enough about what your support has meant to me; you've always been my biggest cheerleaders. I know there were games and meets I missed, but I made it to everything I possibly could. And through it all, your love never wavered. Thank you for understanding the passion I brought to my work and for sharing me with so many others.

"And to the heart of this program -- our athletes, current and former -- thank you for trusting me. Thank you for believing in our vision. You are the building blocks of everything we've achieved. Watching you grow from wide-eyed recruits into confident, strong, successful women, wives and mothers has been the greatest reward of this job. People often ask me what I love most about coaching. The answer is simple: it's you. Always you. To the entire Michigan community -- thank you for giving me not just a job, but a life, a purpose, and a family. Serving as the head coach of the University of Michigan Women's Gymnastics program has been the greatest honor of my life. Not many people get to say they only ever had one job, but I did. And it was the best one imaginable. I may be stepping away from the floor, but I'll never be far from this program or the people who make it so special. From the bottom of my heart, thank you. And as always ... forever, Go Blue!"

"Bev is an icon in the women's gymnastics community and stands as one of the most successful coaches in the history of the sport," said Warde Manuel, the Donald R. Shepherd Director of Athletics. "No coach in the history of the Big Ten Conference in any sport has won more titles than Bev. She built and sustained one of the nation's premier gymnastics programs, highlighted by winning the 2021 national championship and 26 Big Ten titles. The success Bev has brought to our program is unparalleled, and the gymnasts she has nurtured into exceptional athletes, students and citizens are unmatched. We will deeply miss her presence in the gym but wish Bev and Jim immense enjoyment in her well-deserved retirement."

One of the nation's top gymnastics coaches, Plocki is an 11-time Big Ten Coach of the Year, a 13-time NCAA Regional Coach of the Year and a two-time National Coach of the Year, earning the honor in 2021 and 1994. She has led Michigan to 13 NCAA Regional titles and has guided the Wolverines to 25 top-10 finishes at the NCAA Championships. Under her tutelage, Michigan captured a Big Ten-record seven conference titles in a row from 1999 to 2005, while 53 of her student-athletes have secured 212 NCAA All-America honors and nine NCAA individual national titles.

Plocki and the Wolverines joined an exclusive club, becoming just the seventh team to ever capture an NCAA women's gymnastics title in 2021, scoring the third-best score in championship history and the best score in Michigan history. The Wolverines joined Georgia, Utah, UCLA, Alabama, Oklahoma and Florida as the only teams in the country to win a national championship at the time, as LSU was added in the 2024 campaign. Plocki and her staff led Michigan to its first national championship with a then-program-best 198.2500. The Wolverines eclipsed the 198 mark for the first time in 2021 and ended the season with four scores of 198.000 or higher.

Plocki inherited the program in 1990, which had finished no better than fourth at the Big Ten in the seven seasons prior to her arrival. She took Michigan from a seven-win team in her first year (1990) to a 20-win team in her third year (1992), while also securing the program's second Big Ten title and second NCAA Championships appearance. She also captured the first of what would be four-straight Big Ten Coach of the Year awards in 1992, while adding the first of four NCAA Regional Coach of the Year trophies to her mantle. Michigan also celebrated its first NCAA All-American when freshman Beth Wymer finished among the nation's best in the uneven bars and in the all-around competition, earning a pair of NCAA All-America (first team) accolades. The Wolverines proceeded to rally off a then-Big Ten record six-straight conference titles over the next six years as Plocki vaulted Michigan to the top of the conference. In just three seasons, Michigan became a perennial contender for the national championship.

In 36 seasons at Michigan, her gymnasts have also received a total of 191 All-Big Ten honors and won or tied for 110 Big Ten individual event titles. Plocki has coached 14 Big Ten Gymnast of the Year and 13 Big Ten Freshman of the Year award winners. She has also coached four AAI Award winners and eight Big Ten Medal of Honor recipients.

Her student-athletes have also excelled in the classroom, with 103 student-athletes being named Academic All-Big Ten and 73 student-athletes earning Scholastic All-America accolades. Plocki's Wolverines earned Michigan's inaugural Community Service Award in 2001, repeating in 2002, while earning the Leaders and Best Award in 2000 and 2001, given to the U-M team with the highest GPA.

Plocki, a native of Butler, Pa., was a gymnast at Alabama for one season (1983) before transferring and finishing up her college career at West Virginia (1985-87), where she received her bachelor's of science degree in physical education (1987), and her master's degree in sports management and administration (1989). She is a graduate of the NCAA Women's Coaches Academy (Dimension II), where she was the recipient of the Judy Sweet Spirit Award in 2007 and was a member of the 2018 West Virginia Hall of Fame Class.

Kanewa-Hermelyn elevated to head coach of women's gymnastics program

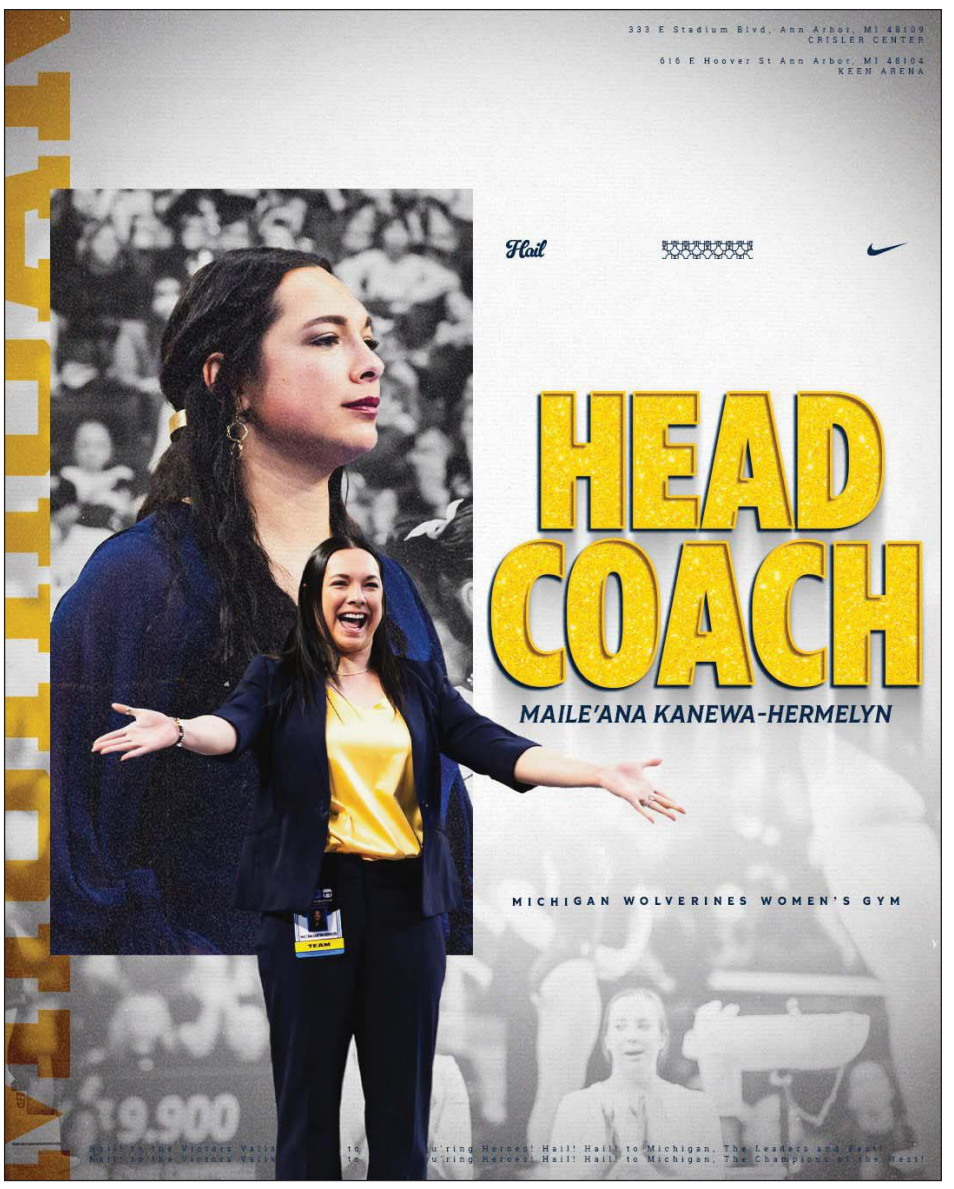
Kanewa-Hermelyn has spent seven total seasons with the coaching staff – six as a full-time assistant (2020-25) and one as a volunteer assistant coach (2019).

Kanewa-Hermelyn becomes the seventh head coach in Michigan program history, dating back to 1976, and assumes full control of the U-M women's gymnastics program following the retirement of 36-year head coach Bev Plocki.

"Maile'ana is an exceptional young coach with a championship pedigree and an unwavering commitment to excellence," said Manuel. "Over the past six seasons, she has played a pivotal role in our women's gymnastics program, drawing from her experience as a three-time national champion during her collegiate career to help us win the 2021 national title. Bev has been intentional in mentoring and preparing Maile'ana for this leadership role, and we have been thoughtfully planning this transition together. We are thrilled for Maile'ana to step into the head coach role and confident that she will continue to build upon the tradition of success in our women's gymnastics program."

"It's an absolute honor to lead the University of Michigan Women's Gymnastics program -- a place where excellence is tradition and the block M stands for something bigger than all of us," said Kanewa-Hermelyn. "I'm committed to continue building a culture rooted in integrity, grit, and joy as well as helping these incredible young women thrive in and out of the gym. I want them to leave here after their four years as powerful and strong women, and leaders ready to take on the world. I am dedicated to not only bettering this team and these athletes, but also our staff and program. We're here to raise the standard and compete for championships the Michigan way. Let's Go Blue!"

Legendary Michigan Women's Gymnastics Head Coach
THANK YOU, COACH!
BEV PLOCKI
• 1 National Title (2021)
• 26 Big Ten Conference Titles
• 13 NCAA Regional Championships
• 26 NCAA Championship appearances
• 10 NCAA Super Six appearances
• 2x National Coach of the Year
• 13x NCAA Regional Coach of the Year
• 11x Big Ten Coach of the Year
1990-2025
Hail! to the Victors Valiant!
Hail! to the Conqu'ring Heroes!
Hail! Hail! to Michigan, The Leaders and Best!



SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

ABOVE: Bev Plocki has retired after 36 seasons at the helm of the University of Michigan women's gymnastics program.
BELOW: Maile'ana Kanewa-Hermelyn has been named Michigan's head women's gymnastics coach.

Kanewa-Hermelyn was the WCGA Assistant Coach of the Year along with Scott Sherman and Lexi Funk following the Wolverines' national title in 2021 and is a three-time Regional Assistant Coach of the Year, with her first coming in the 2020 season. During her tenure, Michigan earned its first-ever national title in the 2021 season, and has won three Big Ten championships and four Big Ten regular-season titles.

Kanewa-Hermelyn helped coach the Wolverines to their 27th Big Ten title in the 2023 campaign and earned six scores of 198-plus. On the beam, Kanewa-Hermelyn led the Wolverines to a program record 49.625 against both Nebraska and Minnesota and was an integral part of Michigan's six weeks of ranking No. 1 nationally on floor after choreographing Michigan's routines. In 2024, Kanewa-Hermelyn's beam team ranked as high as sixth nationally, while she helped the Wolverines floor squad to a No. 4 ranking and the vault to a No. 23 ranking. During the 2025 season, sophomore Kayli Boozer was the College Gym News Breakthrough Athlete of the Year after breaking into three lineups with the help of Kanewa-Hermelyn.

After the national championship season, the Wolverines topped the national rankings for nine straight weeks to start the 2022 season and continued to set a new standard for Michigan gymnastics. The Wolverines set a program record with a 198.525 at Rutgers, which at the time ranked as the sixth-highest score in NCAA history. In the same meet, U-M set a program record on the vault with a 49.875 -- the second highest in NCAA history at the time, which included three straight perfect 10.0s. Michigan also broke its previous floor record, recording a 49.750 at home against Auburn and West Virginia.

In her second season as a full-time assistant coach, she helped Michigan to its first national championship with a program-best 198.2500. The Wolverines eclipsed the 198 mark for the first time in 2021 and ended the season with four scores of 198.000 or higher. U-M also broke the U-M balance beam (49.600) and uneven bars (49.725) records, while notching the second-best score in program history on the vault with a 49.800. The Wolverines finished the regular season ranked in the top 15 in all four events, including leading the nation on the vault, and went into the NCAA Championships ranked second nationally.

Following the 2020 season, she was named the WCGA Northeast Regional Assistant Coach of the Year. U-M won the 2020 Big Ten regular-season title before the postseason was canceled due to COVID-19.

Kanewa-Hermelyn was a gymnast at Oklahoma from 2012-16, and was a part of two national championship teams in 2014 and 2016. She earned All-America honors on both vault and floor in 2014, and finished fourth on vault and as the NCAA runner-up on floor. She was also a two-time Big 12 vault champion (2013, '14).

As a senior, Kanewa-Hermelyn was a member of the captain's table for student-athletes. She earned NACGC/W Scholastic All-America honors all four years and was a two-time Academic All-Big 12 selection. She earned the Athletics Council Achievement Award in 2015-16 and graduated from Oklahoma with a bachelor's degree in human relations in 2016.

Upon graduation, Kanewa-Hermelyn was a student assistant coach at Oklahoma, where she helped coach the team to the third national title in program history.

Kanewa-Hermelyn received her master's degree in human relations from the University of Oklahoma in May 2018. While in graduate school, she worked as a graduate assistant in athletic development for the Sooners, aiding in fundraising and growing a donor base.

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Employment

Job Opportunities

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Auctions & Sales

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Garage Sale
2139 Lewis Dr
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July 18th, 19th & 20th
9am-5pm
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For sale, a refurbished mid-2019 Apple Macbook Pro with .4 GHz Intel Core i5 (13.3 inch, 8GB RAM, 256GB SSD) Space Gray (Renewed)
Brand Apple
Model Name MV962LL/A
Screen Size 13.3 Inches
Color Space Gray
Hard Disk Size 256 GB
CPU Model Core i5
Ram Memory Installed Size 8 GB
Operating System Mac OS
Special Feature IPS Retina Display, True Tone Technology, Touch Bar | Touch ID Sensor
Graphics Card Description Integrated
Asking $500. It is still in the box.

Also for sale, a RIF6 adjustable height standing desk converter — 32-inch wide laptop riser or dual monitor workstation. Easily sit or stand with gas spring lift. Still in the box. Asking $75. Will sell in combo with the computer or separately.

Call (269)462-0183

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Public Notices

Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

Scarlett Towing is having an abandoned vehicle auction. Auction date 7/21/25 @ 8:00 am Vehicle up for auction
2013 Lincoln MKX
Vin: 2LMDJ8JK6DBL43624
Vehicle unknown running condition and miles
Location: 7979 Deans Hill Rd, Berrien Center

Niles Daily Star:
July 19, 2025
AV/13 LINCOLN

PUBLIC NOTICE

Abandoned vehicle auction. July 24, 2025 @ 8:30am.

1996 GMC
Vin 1GKEK13K25J767241
2012 Chrysler
Vin 1C3CCBBB0N236612
2019 Nissan
Vin 1N4BL4EV2KC245692
2013 Ford
Vin 1FADP3K23DL371208

Contact Clarks Towing @ 269-861-6112 for viewing locations and times.
Bidding starts at acquired fees and social distancing. Rules still apply.

Niles Daily Star:
July 19, 2025
AV/96 GMC

PUBLIC NOTICE

CITY OF NILES
NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD
ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

This notice serves as public notice of the open 30-day public comment period to obtain the views of citizens concerning The City of Niles Community Development Block Grant Program Year 2025 Annual Action Plan, prior to the public hearing which will be held on August 25, at 6:00pm via the City of Niles Fire Department and Council Chambers, 1345 E Main Street, Niles, MI.
The City of Niles expects to receive $270,102.00 in CDBG funds for program year 2025 (October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026) for the purposes of undertaking a variety of projects meeting one of the three national objectives – 1) benefit low- and moderate-income persons, 2) aid in the prevention or elimination of slums and blight, or 3) meet other community development needs having a particular urgency. The proposed projects include Public Services (approximately $40,500); Code Enforcement ($75,000); Blight and Beautification (approximately $90,000) and Program Administration (approximately $50,000). An electronic version of the 2025 Annual Action Plan may be viewed on the City's website at https://www.nilesmi.org/departments_and_divisions/community_development_department.php.
PLEASE BE NOTIFIED that you are invited to provide input by contacting the CDBG Coordinator as outlined below or attending the hearing and to present your opinions or position concerning the subject of this hearing. If you are unable to attend the hearing, you may send a letter stating your opinions or position to the City of Niles (Attn. CDBG Coordinator), 333 N. 2 nd Street, Niles, MI 49120, or email CDBGCoordinator@nilesmi.org.
The City of Niles will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services to those individuals with impairments who wish to attend its public meetings upon receiving at least one week's notice. Any such individual requiring such aids or services should contact the City by writing to City of Niles ADA Coordinator, 333 N 2nd Street, Niles, MI, 49120, or calling 269.683.4700 or 269.683.1313 to access the TDD (Telecommunication Device for the Deaf) for individuals with hearing or speech impairment.
Dated: July 15, 2025
Sanya Vitale
CDBG Coordinator

Niles Daily Star:
July 19, 2025
COMMENTS/ACTION PLAN

PUBLIC NOTICE

CITY OF NILES
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

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Dated: July 15, 2025
Sanya Vitale
CDBG Coordinator

Niles Daily Star:
July 19, 2025
HEARING 08.25.25

PUBLIC NOTICE

Economy Storage, 2206 Yankee Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction Saturday July 26, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

Unit #	Name
10	Charmin Kelly
28	Emalee Anderson
32	Eric Johnson
60	Anthony Sharp
67	Jerome Jankowiak
85	Shelden Walden
116	Melissa Kaeding
127/633	Chris Norris
145/467/468	Michael Merritt
148	Gloster Johnson
164	Brady Hattenback
173	George Tovey III
177	Larry Wegrecki
184/66	Mary Anderson
192	Patricia Yoder
195	Daniel Beushauser
196	Colton Wedgworth
205	Nancy Bombrys
275	Zachary Jahrling
278	Chelsie Carlyle
284	Kathleen Peterson
342	Terrence Moss
346	DaMonica Williams
352/355	Andre Ahlers
368	Erin Weed
386	Shannon Lego
389	Parnell Jenkins
390	Larry Hungerford
399	Les Hart
410/534	Rebecca Coleman
411	Ronald Shodowski
427	McCade Reese
429	Aaron Haynes
442	Dawn Hojara
451	Jean Fitch
452	Tyler Mahar
530	Justin Landis
541	Nicole Hurt
605	Michael Lewark
608	Robert Conner
613	Nicole Jones
661/665	Rodney Prescott
677/567	Julie Potate

Niles U-Stor-It, 1314 E. Main Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction Saturday July 26,2025 at 10:30 a.m.

4	Molly Morse
54	Cynthia Swisher
57	Nathan Haynes

J & J Storage, 2220 S. 13th Street and 2627 S. 11th Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction Saturday July 26, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.

57	James Colburn
97	Blake King
126A	John Daniel
199A/88	Nick Gigliotti
311A	Michael Tapia
108	Javier Roman
227	Jennifer Nichols
238/466	James Diss
250	Robert Clayton/ Jessica Vissik
262	Brittany Backus
263	Tamara Holmes
292	The Woodshed Crafts
327	Robert Davis
355	Carson Bowlin
377	Christy Stevens
389	Llandon Ross
426	James Schilling Jr.
452	Aaron Smith
496	Nicole Brugh
497	Courtney Rybolt

Niles Daily Star:
July 12 and 19, 2025
STORAGE AUCTION

PUBLIC NOTICE

SYNOPSIS OF THE MINUTES OF THE ONTWA TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES MONDAY JULY 14, 2025

The regular meeting of the Ontwa Township Board of Trustees was called to order at 6:20pm.
Pledge of Allegiance
Roll Call
Approval of the Agenda
Public Comment
Approval of Consent Agenda
Commissioner's Report: Commissioner Marchetti
Committee Board Reports: No reports this month
Old Business: Elkhart Road Project, DASAS
New Business: Eagle Lake and Garver Lake SAD Resolutions, Cass Family Clinic
Mobile and Mental Unit, Wastewater Perceptive, Kraus Park Slide Repair
Schedule of Township meetings: Board of Trustees August 11 th , Police Board August 14 th , Wastewater Board July 23 rd , Planning Commission August 6 th , Ambulance Board August 13 th
Meeting Adjourned 6:51pm
Minutes of Board of Trustee meetings may be found on the Township website: www.ontwatwp.org
Respectfully submitted by Tina VanBelle, Ontwa Township Clerk
Approved for Publication by Supervisor Meryl Christensen

Niles Daily Star:
July 19, 2025
SYNOPSIS

Legal Notices

LEGAL NOTICE

STATE OF MICHIGAN
COUNTY OF BERRIEN
CREDITORS NOTICE
FILE NO 2025-0460-DE-R
ESTATE
OF KENNETH EUGENE DANIEL, DECEASED
DATE OF BIRTH: MARCH 22, 1945

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS including creditors of the deceased whose interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following:
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The Decedent, KENNETH EUGENE DANIEL, who lived at 750 Colony Court, Apartment 4, Niles, Michigan, died June 11, 2024.
Creditors of the Decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Kenneth E. Daniel, Jr., named Personal Representative, and to the probate court at 811 Port Street, St. Joseph, Michigan 49085 - 1183, within four (4) months after the date of publication of this notice.

Robert L. Landgraf, Jr.
(P 23000), Post Office Box 1310, Niles, Michigan 49120 - 1310. Tele: (269) 683 - 8300.

Kenneth E. Daniel, Jr.
1641 Superior Street
Niles, Michigan 49120

Niles Daily Star:
July 19, 2025
EST/DANIEL, K.

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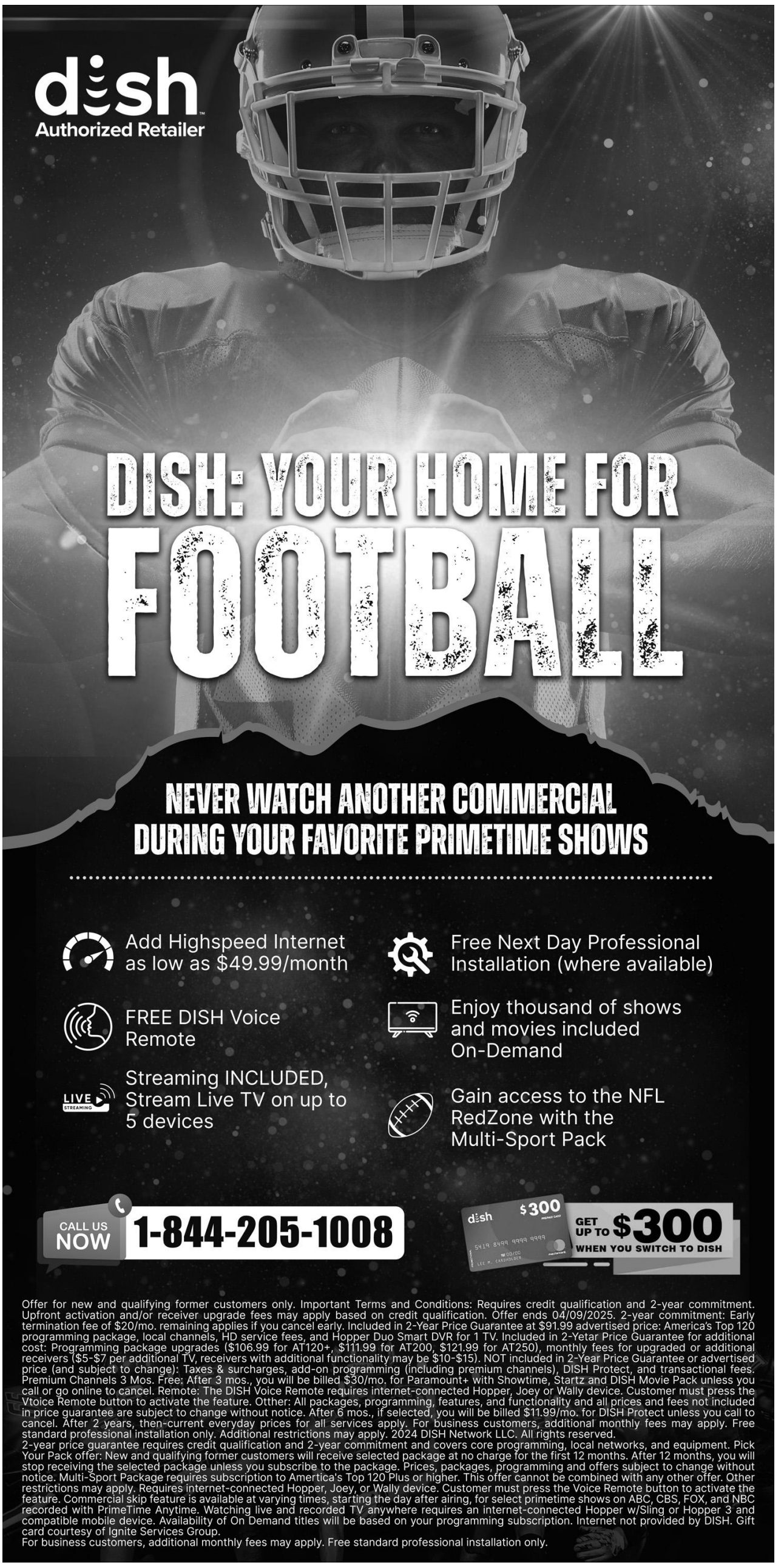
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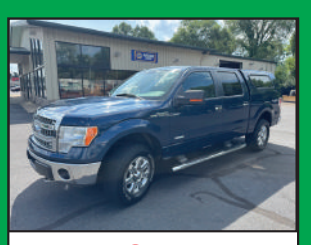

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Sur is nice fer a low price!

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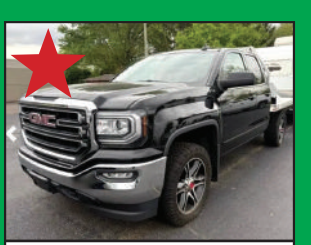

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